

Volume 20, No. 06 • January 25, 2013

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# 500 Issues of *the Nation*

by Will Nicholls

How did we ever get here? According to traditional business models, we did everything wrong. Our first issues were sent to the communities we wanted to serve with a few prayers and a lot of hope that they would actually arrive. One community member questioned whether we would be able to find enough news and stories to fill each issue. It turned out that wasn't a problem. Everyone and their dog had a story or a news tip and it wasn't possible to print everything that deserved to be brought to our communities' attention. It still isn't. Our biggest initial obstacle was financing the next issue and that remains true, at times, even now.

I remember one advertiser who was upset with a story we published, and yes, there was more than one person like that. This advertiser mentioned how much they had paid us over the year. I informed him the integrity of the *Nation* was not that cheaply purchased. That didn't mean it wasn't for sale, however: I told him he could buy control of editorial content for \$1 million a year. Thankfully, the offer was not accepted. On the other hand, that money could have paid for one hell of an investigative news story after the year was up. If someone or an organization is willing to pay that much then something needs to be looked at and passed on to our readers.

I use this anecdote to demonstrate that the *Nation* won't back down from a story no matter how much it might cost us. That was what made us different. We believed in what we were doing and it was an expensive lesson but we stuck to our guns. Our readers came before any other consideration, and you still do.

At times the *Nation* was politically, socially and financially ostracized.

Dissent within the Cree Nation is sometimes a costly exercise, whether the dissenter is an individual or an organization. We have not been exempt from this but did not let it affect our goal of creating discussion on important issues. That is the purpose of and mission statement of the *Nation*. It is simply to offer information, ideas and arguments to people so they can make up their own minds on how they want to act on that knowledge.

In our 100th issue Ernest Webb said it best: "One of our goals at the *Nation* is to introduce a level of dissent so the issues can be discussed. Issues that used to be swept under the rug and allowed to fester. How many times have you heard about someone who is accountable to the people doing something they shouldn't be doing? How many times have you wished someone did something about it? We are trying to do something. We are trying to do our part. Our part in being a strong Cree Nation."

We are still trying to follow this path but we also make a point to show what's good in our culture. We promote role models, programs, achievements, and we celebrate when we overcome challenges placed in our peoples' and nation's path.

Five hundred issues seem so like so much work that began so long ago and yet it also feels like we have only just begun. That's because the reasons we founded the *Nation* and the goals we made for ourselves have not changed. But during that time we have reported and been a part of the many changes in the Cree Nation. Through it all the *Nation* has been there, and with your help, we always will be.

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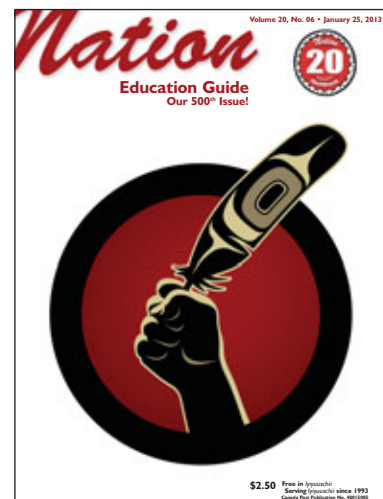
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# Keeping busy in the cold

by Sonny Orr



Back in the day, the winter cold didn't seem to have much effect on the hardy souls of the north. It was just another day, where 40 below meant thick ice, thick clothing and thick skin. It was a blessing for many who had the means to trap for fur-bearing animals. Furs not only kept you warm, but also meant some hard-earned cash while the price of fur was still reasonably high. The rule of thumb was that, the colder the winter, the finer the furs. So a cold winter was a prosperous winter as higher-quality furs commanded top price at auctions around the world.

While the trapper often would go out for weeks and months, using only snowshoes to get around and, most of the time, only an axe to keep wood in stove burning. This was a harsh life, but for many families, it was a life without debt, discouragement and vices. Everyone at the camp, except infants, had a role to play, which nearly always meant working at chores. Chores were constant: chopping firewood, checking traps, chopping more firewood and hauling water quick enough before it froze. In a pinch, snow would be melted, but using snow also meant drinking whatever would be trapped inside, so pure ice was preferred, if water couldn't be hauled to the camp. Using ice meant chopping more firewood, which meant more work. So life was without stress.

Today, winter means driving around full blast on a high-powered snowmobile, but only if you can afford the machine, fuel and oils. Back in the day, gas was cheaper, but now, the average snowmobile costs almost as much to operate as a V8-powered vehicle. The way fuel prices

are today, heating the average home costs quite a bit as well. So life repeats itself as we once again chop firewood to feed a hungry wood stove in order to keep costs down. Today, most wood can be purchased from the guys who own snowmobiles, who in turn, have to supplement the cost of fuel to get the firewood by selling it. Some communities even have programs to help subsidize firewood for elders, who had to endure the hardships of long cold winters on the land.

One side effect of those cold days is also related to the lack of sunlight, which makes even the cheeriest folks a little depressed. This can affect many people, but the real treatment for this is to get so pooped out from all the hard work during the daylight hours that sleep comes easily, and the darkness cannot get ahold of the mind to cause any depression. Can you imagine the effect it has on people today, people who have too much energy left over and have to pass the time wasting away in front of the boob tube? Life gets boring.

Back then, however, it was time for storytelling, especially the stories that cannot be told during the summer months, lest spirits and others pick them up. Apparently, spirits hibernate too, so it is safer to tell these stories of old without fear of reprisal from the ancient ones. Today, elders pass around cassette tapes of old legends and stories to keep everyone quiet just at bedtime. Most story endings are never heard, mainly due to all the snoring from the audience, who are now blissfully asleep. (Anyone yawning yet?) ZZZZZzzzz

*the Nation* is published every two weeks

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\$60 PLUS TAXES, US: \$90, ABROAD: \$110

PAYABLE TO BEESUM COMMUNICATIONS

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PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005

ISSN #1206-2642

## *The Nation* IS A MEMBER OF:

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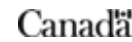
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We acknowledge the financial support of the

Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical

Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

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# Darlene Cheechoo elected to chair the CRA Board of Compensation

news

by Akiva Levitas

It's easy to forget how much one person can take upon them to grow their communities. Darlene Cheechoo is the reminder that one can achieve success through a career built on working for the Cree Nation.

On December 20, the 21 members of the Cree Regional Authority's (CRA) Board of Compensation elected Darlene Cheechoo as the new chairperson. Cheechoo also adopts the role of President for the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company Inc. (CREECO).

Cheechoo was first elected to the CRA Board of Compensation as a representative of Waskaganish in 2008 and won re-election in 2012. She served as vice-chairperson of the Board since December 2011 until December 2012. She also currently serves as head of CREECO-Dumas, a mining development service established in 2012 in partnership with Dumas Contracting Ltd. and Eeyou Baril, which distributes construction supplies. Both companies are among the many subsidiaries of CREECO.

As the new president of CREECO, Cheechoo is tasked with ensuring the continued prosperity and development of the Cree economy as well as to promote the training, advancement, and employment for members of the Cree First Nation. The stated purpose of

CREECO is to create self-sufficiency and they are setting about achieving that through increasing their competitiveness in all markets.

Cheechoo brings with her a vast amount of experience acquired through her work as a former vice-chairperson at the Cree School Board and as Waskaganish School Commissioner. During her time at the Cree School Board, she worked on raising expectations in regards to student success.

Along with her experience in managing projects and shaping a corporate vision, she brings with her more than a decade of higher education with a Masters in Law as well as degrees in Common Law and Civil Law. Cheechoo was already married when she began her studies as a mature student. She also earned a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts.

In an interview with the *Canadian Institute of Mining (CIM) Magazine*, Cheechoo says her late mother motivated her to finish her training and to work for the people of her community. "She was my greatest cheerleader," Cheechoo said.

With so much accomplished, Cheechoo is a role model for all the young men and women in her community. "Achieving personal goals often requires tremendous sacrifice and commitment, but if you set your mind to it,



Darlene Cheechoo

there's no limit to what you can accomplish," she told the CIM magazine.

Darlene Cheechoo is ready to take the lead in developing the economy of Eeyou Istchee. Her previous experience and education will serve her well as she works on promoting the development and training of members of the Cree community and creating new business opportunities in Eeyou Istchee and the surrounding communities.



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A DIVISION OF BELL ALIANT

# Heart, head and hockey

## New organization to oversee expansion of Cree sports programs

by Brandon Judd

news

Cree athletic programs will now have a unified plan for their future, as a new umbrella organization begins life with a mandate to expand programs and ensure the consistency and quality of sport and recreation activities among all communities in Eeyou Istchee.

The Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association (EISRA) will become the governing body of all Cree communities' sports programs. The integrated oversight committee is tasked with maximizing the physical wellbeing of the James Bay Cree.



The EISRA began formulating a five-year plan for sports programs in earnest in December. It starts, they say, with working to improve existing programs. The committee will first assume management of the James Bay Hockey League and the Cree Hockey and Broomball tournament in Val d'Or, then work to create new community projects.

"We want to ensure the association asserts itself as the governing body for [the JBHL and the tournament], but this doesn't necessarily mean governing recreation departments themselves," explained John Henry Wapachee, who

helped present the organization's plan to a meeting of Cree band council chiefs in December. "We can partner with them. Ninety per cent of the board members are working in recreation and sports departments in communities, which is a good representation we believe."

After setting up the early framework of the EISRA – the documents making it a legal corporation under Canadian law – Wapachee presented to the chiefs with Raymond Shanush, president of the EISRA. That presentation was about the other crucial building block.

"Finance is definitely an issue for expansion, which partially motivated the meeting with the chiefs," said Shanush. "We want to develop a senior hockey league, junior A and B leagues, and a women's broomball league."

The mention of programs tailored for girls is significant as in most Cree communities the availability of hockey programs for girls ends after Midget, and there's not much beyond that level. Citing the rise in diabetes and obesity among the James Bay Cree, Shanush and Wapachee both stressed the broader role of the organization.

"A lot of the programs we do in sports and recreation are mainly to promote phys-

ical fitness and healthy lifestyle within the Cree Nation," said Wapachee. "We want things to be geared towards the physical benefits of the person and community."

"That's the first thing: getting active them active to combat [the rise in obesity]," added Shanush. "Each community has its own program to promote healthy eating and an active lifestyle, and that's something we will be able to plan better as a group."

It's not surprising that there is a strong focus on hockey. The James Bay Minor Hockey League currently serves as a feeder to the Cree elite program, which Wapachee said the EISRA hopes to expand to include elite-level Atom, Peewee, Bantam and Midget teams. The logistics of this would be impossible without the expanded committee structure, Shanush said.

"We're a small community: there's about 16,000 people, but we're really spread out," he observed. "Three hours drive minimum, and usually you have to fly. We're limited during the season with how much we can travel. By getting the organizations together, we avoid all the conflicts and make everything as easy as possible. That way we can budget accordingly, and we can actually plan for the next five years by working together."

A minor softball tournament is in the works for the summer, as well as a new idea to introducing swim competitions for communities with pools. And though this will provide plenty of fun for Cree young and old, the focus is on a healthier future.

"Aside from health and well being, we put a strong emphasis on education," said Wapachee. "It's about making the kids understand education is important for them. There are some communities that have set up rules about doing well in school to be in the league, and we're going to encourage this. Our prime goal is that students will focus on their education."





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Lillianna La-thia Karla Rose Whiskeychan

## The first Cree baby of 2013

On January 2, Valerie Rose Whiskeychan and Murphy Diamond celebrated the arrival of their third child, Lillianna La-thia Karla Rose Whiskeychan, the first Cree arrival of 2013.

Valerie gave birth to Lillianna at the Val d'Or Hospital at 7:45 pm to a healthy baby weighing 7 pounds, 12 ounces, or 3.51 kg. The delivery went smoothly and both the mother and the baby are doing well. The baby girl joins brother Vernon Whiskeychan and sister Harly Stephen as the newest member of the family.

There is much to say about what happened in 2012. All of the changes that took place and movements that blossomed from the grassroots. We all were witnesses to these events either by participating or through social discussion. But to those born afterwards, it will be up to us to pass down what happened.

Congratulations to the family on their beautiful baby girl, Lillianna, the first Cree of the New Year.

## Court recognizes rights of Métis and non-status Indians

A Federal Court ruling delivered January 8 obligates the Canadian government to expand its definition of rights-bearing Aboriginals to include Métis and non-status Indians.

Federal Court Justice Michael Phelan stated in his decision the government should eliminate the "constitutional uncertainty surrounding these groups," which affect about 600,000 people.

The decision, which caps a 13-year legal battle, affords clear negotiating rights with the federal government. Until now, these groups found themselves in a grey area between provincial and federal jurisdiction, and expressed frustration with being sent back and forth between governments.

Betty Ann Lavallée, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' National Chief, called it "a very hopeful day for all off-reserve Aboriginal peoples. This is huge and it ends the denial of Aboriginal birthrights that has existed for far too long among off-reserve Métis and Non-Status Indians. This ruling makes it very clear that Metis and Non-Status Indians fall under federal jurisdiction."

Though Justice Phelan stopped short of defining financial obligations the federal government has to these new groups, the decision is expected to significantly

increase the amount of money going to Aboriginal groups. It is also expected to cause a spike in application for recognition as a Métis or Indian.

The federal government is expected to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

## Phil Fontaine awarded Order of Canada

Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, will be appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada for his lifetime of public service.

Phil Fontaine was born in Sagkeeng First Nation in 1944. He attended a residential school in his youth and later in his life voiced criticism of this system.

As AFN National Chief, Fontaine negotiated the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which provided compensation and programs to help residential school survivors. Fontaine's tenure as AFN National Chief was the longest in the organization's history; he is the only chief to be elected to three terms.

The criterion for the Order of Canada is "outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation."

Phil Fontaine will be awarded his insignia at Rideau Hall in Ottawa at a date to be announced.

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: [www.tundracomics.com](http://www.tundracomics.com)





## Heading in a New Direction

### *The Nation's* annual education and training guide

by Amy German

As a new year is often a traditional time to blaze a new trail in one's life, and choosing a course of study is a great way to start.

Whether you are looking to take a quick career course to get back out on the job market in a new trade or looking to make the first step of many on the academic road, this guide can help you map your way.

It could be that you are looking to start up a business and want to learn about becoming an entrepreneur, or learn new skills in aesthetics or mechanics, or even find a job at one of the major mining operations that will soon be opening up within the Cree communities.

You may be interested in becoming a professional such as a teacher, a nurse or even a lawyer and want to know where would be the best place to study to get the proper prerequisites.

Even if you just want to brush up on your language skills, or need the proper level of math and science courses to go into another program, or simply want to learn all you can about Aboriginal culture, read on!

There are many new opportunities for employment within Eeyou Istchee as local economies are growing from a wealth of new projects in the region. These mean new career possibilities in health sciences, construction, mining-related trades, teaching, running a business and others.

Starting out with courses especially tailored for Crees that are geared at getting the people of the communities working from within the communities as soon as possible, the following courses are available locally through the Cree School Board.

## Courses available through Sabtuan in the Cree communities

For those looking to train for new careers but want to stay within Eeyou Istchee, the Cree School Board has a wide variety of courses at their vocational school in Waswanipi or at various other locations throughout the communities.

Below is a list of programs on offer:

### Computing Support

This program is all about teaching students the basics of IT in areas such as problem solving, researching information, time management, network establishment, operation and maintenance. This course also trains students to use software and hardware on both older and newer systems, the use of application software, creating and using databases and the use of telecommunications.

It will also include workplace communication skills training, workplace interaction, appropriate customer support and managing networks: for instance, assessing the structure and functioning of computer systems, developing pro-

grams, installing hardware and software, managing access, setting up resource sharing, troubleshooting and computer optimization.

This 1800-hour course will be taught in Chisasibi and at the Waswanipi Sabtuan Regional Vocational Training Centre (SRVTC).

### Recreational Vehicle Mechanics

This course teaches students the necessary knowledge and skills to check, repair and adjust the motors of a wide variety of machinery: lawnmowers, snowmobiles, snow blowers, chainsaws, lawn tractors, the all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, outboard motors, golf carts and so on.

Students will learn to check and repair the ignition, different parts of the fuel systems, lubrication systems and cooling servicing and maintenance of light vehicles.

This 1800-hour course will be taught in Chisasibi.

### Home Care Assistance

For those looking to help the sick and infirm within their own communities,

this home-care assistance program provides the proper training in basic care and services for those in need.

Students in this program learn how to assist their clients to carry out everyday activities and help them organize their living environment while also ensuring their safety, and how to intervene in a crisis or emergency situation.

Students will learn how to help clients integrate and socialize in individual or community activities. All of these tasks require establishing a relationship of trust with clients and those close to them. Home-care attendants also receive training in providing care and services in the home. They help vulnerable or at-risk clientele carry out everyday domestic activities, such as preparing meals. They also advise clients on their lifestyle habits and provide parenting support, if applicable.

The goal is to meet the general needs of clients, to help them compensate for their disabilities, to maintain and promote their autonomy, to accompany and support them in their daily and domestic lives, while taking into account any family or social problems that could interfere

This 975-hour program is offered in Eastmain.





## Driving a School Bus

This course helps potential school bus drivers meet provincial standards. It requires students to fully comprehend the five sectors of the industry: urban transport, school transport, intercity transportation, chartered transportation and paratransit. Completion of this course leads to a class I license issued by the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec.

This 330-hour program is offered in Mistissini in partnership with the Charlebourg school board.

## Food and Beverage Services

The Food and Beverage Service program is all about how to transform the average Joe or Jane into a food service professional equipped to not only wait tables but perform so much more in a dining room. Students in this program learn how to prepare a dining room, proper customer rapport, how to explain menus and dishes, to take and process orders, to perform billing and collection operations, to recommend and serve wines, to provide beverage service, to provide banquet service, to provide informal service, to provide formal service, and how to integrate into the workplace.

This 960-hour program is taught in Waswanipi at the Sabtuan Centre.

## Trucking Class I

Anyone who yearns for a life on the road could profit from this truck-driving course. This skill is in demand in Eeyou Istchee and could help you experience a world beyond the great white north.

Students in this field will learn defensive and fuel-efficient driving, courtesy behind the wheel, professionalism in the field, time management, handling of unexpected events, how to handle emergencies and positive image projection.

This 615-hour course is offered Waswanipi in partnership with the Centre de formation professionnelle de Charlebourg.

## Daycare Educator

Students in this program will learn how to organize, prepare and conduct a variety of activities at a daycare centre that are geared at early childhood learning in a safe environment. Child development and child wellbeing instruction will play a large role in this course as will learning how to handle groups of small children.

This course will be offered in Waswanipi at the Sabtuan Centre.

## Ore Extraction

For those who are looking for long-term employment in the mining indus-

try, the ore-extraction course is the place to start. This 930-hour course prepares the student to use all of the necessary equipment and respect essential safety rules.

This course now has two groups to accommodate the demand for work in this field, in Waswanipi at the Sabtuan Centre and also in Matagami.

## Construction Business Management

As there are presently so many opportunities for construction companies in the north with the incredible amount of development, this program is now available to help out everyone who has ever dreamed at running their own construction business.

This entrepreneurial course teaches how to manage a business that offers general or specialized services in the construction sector. It shows students how to estimate costs relative to the project, prepare proposals, negotiate contracts, plan outlines for work sites, carry out projects and manage the quality of the work. It also covers how to hire personnel, how to negotiate purchasing of materials and how to manage a company's accounts and finances.

This 450-hour course is taught in Whapmagoostui.

## Drilling and Blasting

This program provides students with the skills to safely carry out drilling and blasting procedures as well as teaching workplace norms for this field.

This 900-hour program will be taught in Nemaska starting April 15.

## Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics

This program prepares students to work as maintenance mechanics in the field of industrial construction and there is a great deal of that to happen in Eeyou Istchee's future.

Students will gain the necessary competencies to enter this field,



including how to interpret drawings, specifications and other technical documentation, to diagnose malfunctions in equipment, and to maintain, repair and install industrial equipment.

This 1800-hour course is taught in Amos.

Please note that there will also be program carryovers for the following two programs:

Bus Driving in Waskaganish, starting March 11, and Northern Heavy Equipment Operations, which begins May 14 in Mistissini.

## General Education

For adults who would like to complete their basic education there are general education programs available through Sabtuan.

New for Organizations and Communities, the Sabtuan Customized Training and Community Development Services are now being offered.

Sabtuan is now offering a wide range of quality training solutions to upgrade employee skills and boost workplace productivity. These services are being tailored to individuals, businesses, community and regional entities and organizations represented within the Cree nation.

This program will offer: training needs assessment and planning, content development, pedagogical support, on-site instruction, flexible scheduling. Students will earn certificates of participation after instruction by qualified and experienced professionals

Training Solutions are also being offered in English, French and Cree for Bus Driving and Truck Driving.

There are also health and safety and first aid courses, as well as a special Leadership:

## Cross-Cultural Communication program

For those whose staff need training on office and business skills, there are computer software, computer serv-



CEGEP St-Félicien Natural Wildlife Techniques fireworkers training in a real forestry situation



Collège Chibougamau Nursing

ice and office procedures courses available.

For information on how to sign up for any of the aforementioned programs, contact the Cree School Board or your local guidance office.

## Courses for Crees in Chibougamau

To meet the employment demands within the communities, the Cree

School Board offers custom-designed courses.

Here is a list of programs:

If you are looking to stick close to home but still want to take a valuable career course that could lead to a lifetime of meaningful employment, the Cégep St. Félicien offers instruction tailored specifically for Crees.

Starting with their registered nursing program, launched for the first time back in 2008, this program is a special



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collaboration between Cree Human Resources Development, Cree School Board, Cree Health Board and Emploi Quebec. It was developed to help meet the need for 100 new nurses in Eeyou Istchee.

Not only is this the only English-language nursing program available within James Bay, St. Félicien has a four-year program so that Cree students can take the courses at an adapted pace. This is the same program offered by L'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec which usually runs two years at other institutions. The St. Félicien program has been adapted as a four-year program to accommodate both the educational and cultural needs of Cree students.

To find out more about Cégep St. Félicien at the Centre d'études collégiales à Chibougamau go to: [www.cst-felicien.qc.ca](http://www.cst-felicien.qc.ca)

Also offered by Cégep St. Félicien at the Centre d'études collégiales à Chibougamau in collaboration with Niskamoon, the Natural Environment Technology course is perfect for Crees who would like to spend their life working on the land to ensure that development proceeds according to environmental norms and Cree values.

Students in this program will learn about environmental development, interpretation, wildlife protection and conservation for a career in environment, forestry, wildlife management or ecotourism.

This exciting program will first focus on classroom theory but also offer practical on-the-job training in various settings throughout Chibougamau and the Eastmain-I-A-Sarcelle-Rupert hydro-electric project site. It is a three-year, 2700-hour course developed by Niskamoon Corporation, Cree Human Resources Department, Cree School Board and Hydro-Quebec.

Also available at Cégep St. Félicien is a new program, the Special Needs Educator Profession for Aboriginal and Inuit Children program.

This professional course runs 915 hours and is geared at training profes-

sionals to work with children and families for prevention, re-education and rehabilitation purposes.

Students will learn about everything from early childhood development to the ethical and legal aspects of this line of work. There is also a special focus on the assessment of special needs children and other practical aspects such as intervention techniques, plans and processes.

To find out more go to: [www.seccol.com](http://www.seccol.com)

### Programs for Crees through Niskamoon

The 2002 Apatisiwin Agreement between the Crees and Hydro Quebec established a special mandate to hire a minimum of 150 qualified Cree employees by 2017.

Niskamoon has since been responsible for helping to deliver the following programs to Cree beneficiaries:

### Two Vocational Programs (DEP)

- Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics (DEP 5281)
- Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics (DEP 5260)

### Two Technical Programs (DEC)

- Industrial Electronics in Instrumentation and Automation (DEC 243.06)
- Electronics Technology in Telecommunications/Computers (DEC 243.11)

The following two programs have also been added through Niskamoon: A Civil Engineering Professional DEC available through the CEGEP de l'Abitibi-Temiscamingue and the aforementioned Natural Environment Technology professional program at the CEGEP de St-Félicien in Chibougamau.

Because these programs were developed and adapted for Crees, they all feature the following benefits as part of the program structure to help ensure student success rates:

- a) Monthly Incentive
- b) Successful Semester Incentives
- c) Cree Cultural Leave
- d) Student Activity Funds
- e) Summer Student Employment
- f) Summer Student Equivalent Sponsorship
- g) Improved fluency of the French Language

Graduation from these programs guarantees employment with Hydro Quebec. For more information or to apply go to: [www.niskamoon.org](http://www.niskamoon.org)

Please note that the deadline for applications is March 1, 2013



**WACHIYA!**  
**Achieve your dreams at John Abbott College**



John Abbott College (JAC) situated in Montreal, is considered to be the most beautiful campus in the province. Surrounded by nature, the grounds are a blend of trees, water and green spaces.

The College's Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC) is set up to help Aboriginal students adapt to college life and succeed in their studies. Our students are our top priority and our main objective is for them to enjoy a successful and memorable living and learning experience while at CEGEP.

Whether for personal guidance, tutoring, studying, using the computers and printers, or simply dropping in to relax and meet other students, the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre is the place to be.

To all those who are thinking about going to college, remember: a solid preparation, being committed and motivated to success, and taking a genuine interest in the program you chose will certainly get you far.

\*\*\*\*

### **New Aboriginal Studies Certificate**

❖ **Get a "Value-Added" Diploma** ❖

Certificate programs are offered to JAC students as a supplement to their existing program of study. To obtain the Aboriginal Studies Certificate, which is given out at graduation, students choose six courses from a designated list of courses that relate to Aboriginal cultures, as part of their regular program.

The Aboriginal Studies Certificate is of interest to all students, whether they are Aboriginal or of any other ethnic origin. It will provide you with an awareness of the important contribution Aboriginal people make in national and global contexts. It will also allow for a better understanding of the values and dignity of Aboriginal people everywhere.

For more information about this new certificate visit [www.johnabbott.qc.ca/aboriginalstudies](http://www.johnabbott.qc.ca/aboriginalstudies).

Phone Number: 514 457-6610 ext. 5824 • Fax Number: 514 457-4730  
21,275 Lakeshore Road, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Québec H9X 3L9

## **What Val d'Or has to offer Cree and other First Nations students**

It may have been dubbed the "Sin City" of the north, but Val d'Or is a home away from home for many Natives seeking further education.

There are many courses available in the city that were developed specifically for Native people in order to help them access new careers in fields that are greatly needed in Aboriginal communities.

Those who want to begin one of the university programs offered in Val d'Or but who may not have the necessary credentials or just want to ease back in to academia slowly, the Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue offers an Access to College program as an ideal starting point. Available in both their regular and continuing education programs, it provides access to the First Nations Student Services (FNSS) department to help them brush up on studying skills and transition to other levels.

For more information, go to:

[www.cegepat.qc.ca/accueil/premieres-nations/first-nations](http://www.cegepat.qc.ca/accueil/premieres-nations/first-nations)

## **The L'Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue**

The L'Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) has a number of programs adapted for First Nations. UQAT also helps First Nations students to enrol in almost any program they want because the university has a policy to include Aboriginal perspectives and realities.

At their Val d'Or campus the UQAT is currently offering a wide variety of certificates in everything from Aboriginal Studies to administrative programs, social programs and even some creative programs.

For those seeking administrative careers, the university offers the following as Micro-programs and Certificates: Human Resource Management, Administration, Accounting and a certificate in Management and Regional Development.

For those interested in a career working with young children or society, UQAT also offers a Bachelor Degree in Education and Primary Teaching as well as a Bachelor of Social Work.

For those creative minds that are interested in artistic careers, the university has excellent programs such as their Certificate in Fine Arts and their Certificate in Interactive Multimedia.

For more information go to:

[www.uqat.ca/en/services/firstpeoples/?m=programmes](http://www.uqat.ca/en/services/firstpeoples/?m=programmes)

## **Programs in the South**

Those interested in pursuing their education at one of the many Cégeps or colleges in Quebec or Ontario that provide pre-university or career programs, there are many to choose from. While some students opt for a specific school because they feel that the student life and atmosphere is ideal for them, other prospective students will often go for

a specific institution because it offers programs unavailable elsewhere.

So, if you have a specific program in mind or prefer living in an urban downtown or in a green countryside setting, be sure to do your research to find out what is the most ideal location for you.

Many schools also offer adapted programs for Aboriginals to help get you into the program or career of your dreams.

Here are just a handful of those programs and useful information about institutions that may be of interest:

## John Abbott College

John Abbott College (JAC) is the choice for students looking to study in Montreal's picturesque suburban borough of St-Anne-de-Bellevue and is the only English Cegep in southern Quebec that offers a special program designed to help Cree students integrate into college life and academia. The Pathways to a Career Program for Cree Students is a one-year academic program at which students earn credits toward their DEC (Diplôme d'études



Kiuna Institution

tudes collégiales in Police Technology. Those who complete this course successfully will be qualified to attend the 17-week basic police officer training program at the École nationale de police du Québec in Nicolet.

For more information go to: [www.johnabbott.qc.ca/?B44629F8-B9CB-4E95-8CA2-0CF2196ADF11](http://www.johnabbott.qc.ca/?B44629F8-B9CB-4E95-8CA2-0CF2196ADF11)

## The Kiuna Institution

Quebec's only Aboriginal College, the Kiuna Institution is one of Quebec's newest schools. It was developed to "provide the youth of First Nations with a college specifically devised for them and a learning environment that takes into account their cultural specificities, social background and interests."

Located on the Odanak Reserve, this college may not offer everything that one of the larger Cegeps might but it does have courses to help First Nations students who need it get into regular programming, as well as other courses designed with a specific First Nations perspective.

Students can start out with an Orientation and integration term and Transition term or go directly into their First Nations Social Science program.

For more information on this institution, go to: [www.kiuna-college.com/faq\\_eng.aspx](http://www.kiuna-college.com/faq_eng.aspx)

## Dawson College

For those looking to attend an English-speaking Cegep in downtown

Montreal, Dawson College offers a wide range of choices in areas such the arts, design, medical-science technology career programs or tourism.

In some cases, Dawson is the only Quebec college offering these particular programs in English.

Among them: 3D Animation and Computer Generated Imagery, Illustration and Design, Industrial Design, Graphic Design, Professional Photography, Professional Theatre, Biomedical Laboratory Technology, Civil Engineering Technology, Diagnostic Imaging, Electronic Engineering Technology, Laboratory Technology-Analytical Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Radiation Technology, Community Recreation Leadership Technology, Computer Science Technology and Social Service.

Dawson offers many other generally available programs as well as a many number of specialized pre-university courses. To find out more study options at Dawson College go to: [www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca](http://www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca)

## Vanier College

Vanier College is a happy medium between Dawson's urban intensity and John Abbott's suburban isolation.

Vanier also offers programming that is unavailable at other public anglophone Cegeps, such as their fully accredited music program.

For those feeling ambitious about their college careers, Vanier has special programs for students to do double DEC's, in which students may complete core courses in two different domains as pre-university courses over a three-year period.

Vanier offers a Modern Languages and Music Double DEC as well as double DEC's for Science and Music and Social Science and Music.

In terms of career programs, Vanier also has a unique set of study options: Animal Health Technology, Architectural Technology, Building Systems Engineering Technology, Computerized Systems Technology, Early Childhood Education, Environmental and Wildlife Technology,



collégiales) while benefitting from a social support network.

For more information go to: [www.johnabbott.qc.ca/?9CA5A54B-7518-4D50-A198-12157364A185](http://www.johnabbott.qc.ca/?9CA5A54B-7518-4D50-A198-12157364A185)

For those dreaming of a career with the Eeyou Enou Police Force, the starting point is also at John Abbott because it is the only college that offers the Police Technology Program for First Nations and Inuit Students.

Designed specifically for First Nations and Inuit students, this is an intensive 900-hour credit course. This program leads to an Attestation d'é-



Industrial Electronics, Office Systems Technology, Micropublishing and Hypermedia, Professional Music and Song Techniques, Respiratory and Anesthesia Technology and Special Care Counselling.

For more information on Vanier College: [www.vaniercollege.qc.ca](http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca)

### Going Private

For those students who want to get a quality college education in a specialized environment, there are a wide variety of private colleges in Montreal to choose from.

While some of these institutions offer pre-university programs that lead to a DEC or college diploma others offer certificate courses in specific fields, forgoing higher learning prerequisites for workplace practical information.

Here is just a taste of what Montreal has to offer in terms of English-language private colleges:

### Marianopolis College

For those who want to do Cegep in a more intimate setting with smaller teacher-to-student ratios, Marianopolis will suit their needs but with the added cost of private school tuition. This school only offers pre-university academic programs that lead to a DEC. Their focus is to prepare students for higher learning.

Marianopolis offers the standard science, social science, commerce, creative arts, literature and languages, music, arts and science and music pre-university programs. They also offer a number of double DEC courses.

To find out more:  
[www.marianopolis.edu](http://www.marianopolis.edu)

### Inter Dec College / Lasalle College

If you are looking for a high-end career program or a specialized pre-university course, Inter Dec College and Lasalle College are sister schools on a common campus that offer a wide variety

of high quality courses for serious students in a private setting.

Inter Dec offers career training in a number of fields but does not provide students with the necessary credits to graduate with a DEC. Instead, they offer specialized courses where students graduate with Attestations of Collegial Studies (AEC), Diplomas of Professional Studies (DEP) or In-House Diplomas (AE). This school is geared towards those who want to get out on the job market immediately and may already have some training.

Both schools have a prestigious reputation. They are also bilingual, with programs in both English and French.

The following programs are available at Inter Dec College: Artistic Makeup-Fashion and Beauty, Massage Therapy, Aesthetic Care, Hairdressing, Interior Design, Set and Prop Design, Video Games, Commercial Photography, Video Editing, Graphic Design and 2D/3D Animation.

Lasalle College offers a unique selection of pre-university and technical DEC programs, all of which lead

## Lakehead Supports Aboriginal Learners

Lakehead University is committed to helping Aboriginal peoples further their educational aspirations. Aboriginal programs at Lakehead offer academic, research, and cultural support services tailored to Aboriginal needs.

Office of Aboriginal Initiatives  
[aboriginalinitiatives.lakeheadu.ca](http://aboriginalinitiatives.lakeheadu.ca)

1-807-766-7219 or toll free 1-888-558-3388

### Specialization & Access Programs

Department of Indigenous Learning  
Native Nurses Entry Program  
Native Access Program

### Aboriginal Education

Honours Bachelor of Education (Aboriginal) P/J  
Native Teacher Education Program  
Native Language Instructors' Program

### Administrative & Support Services

Office of Aboriginal Initiatives  
Aboriginal Cultural & Support Services  
Lakehead University Native Students Association  
Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement  
Lakehead University Aboriginal Alumni Chapter  
Elders Program

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UNIVERSITY

either to accelerated university studies or integration into the job market. Many of the programs are not available elsewhere in English. It should be noted that Lasalle is the largest bilingual college in North America and features five specialty schools with over 60 programs to choose from.

Available at Lasalle are the following: Fashion Design DEC, Fashion Marketing DEC, Tourism DEC, Hotel Management DEC, Professional Cooking DEP, Computer Science Technology DEC, Development for Web 2.0 AEC, Insurance and Financial Management Services DEC, SME Accounting AEC, Early Childhood Education DEC, Special Care Counselling DEC,

Lasalle also offers a number of online learning programs. To find out more about these two institutions go to: [www.collegeinterdec.com](http://www.collegeinterdec.com) or [www.collegelasalle.com](http://www.collegelasalle.com)

## Trebas Institute

For those looking to fast track their media career, Trebas Institute is a one-stop shop private institution that trains professionals for the entertainment industry, particularly in the fields of sound, spinning music, and audio and video production.

A private career college, Trebas offers the following four programs that



## Lakehead University

are geared at getting the student into the entertainment job market immediately after graduation: Studio Recording and Live Sound, Sound Design, DJ Arts and Technology, Music Business Administration and Film and Television Production and Post Production.

For more information go to: [www.trebas.com](http://www.trebas.com)

## Montreal Universities

Montreal is a world-class hub for university education, attracting students from across the globe in fields of medicine, education, science and research and, new to the game, animation and video-game design.

Students flock to classic institutions like McGill University, which was established in 1821, or to cutting-edge instruction in places like Université de

Montréal's soon-to-be-completed science pavilions.

For those looking to plot out their the course of their academic life from college through university, it might be best to do individual research on these institutions as they offer such a broad spectrum of programs in many different fields. To find out more on each of Montreal's universities, check out the following web links:

McGill University: [www.mcgill.ca](http://www.mcgill.ca)

Concordia University: [www.concordia.ca](http://www.concordia.ca)

Université du Québec à Montréal: [www.uqam.ca](http://www.uqam.ca)

Université de Montréal: [www.umontreal.ca](http://www.umontreal.ca)

## Eastern Ontario

Eastern Ontario has a wide variety of schools and programs that may be of tremendous interest to Crees and other Aboriginal students.

Here are some highlights in an overview of those institutions:

## Algonquin College

Featuring campuses in Ottawa, Perth and Pembroke, Algonquin College offers over 140 programs. While it is a large institution, according to their literature, Algonquin is nonetheless nurtures a friendly, small-college atmosphere.

Special for Aboriginal students, Algonquin now offers a General Arts and Science Aboriginal Studies program in both one- and two-year programs as well as content on Aboriginal peoples.

For more information: [www.algonquincollege.com](http://www.algonquincollege.com)



McGill University's Education Day, a day dedicated to promoting post-secondary education to Aboriginal youth.



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**T**he Nation is turning 20! To commemorate this historic occasion, the Nation is embarking on a retrospective countdown to its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in November 2013. In the next 20 issues, the Nation flashback will feature some of the Nation's stories, photos and award winning coverage throughout the years, which will be compiled in a 20<sup>th</sup> collector's edition issue.



Volume 5, No. 5

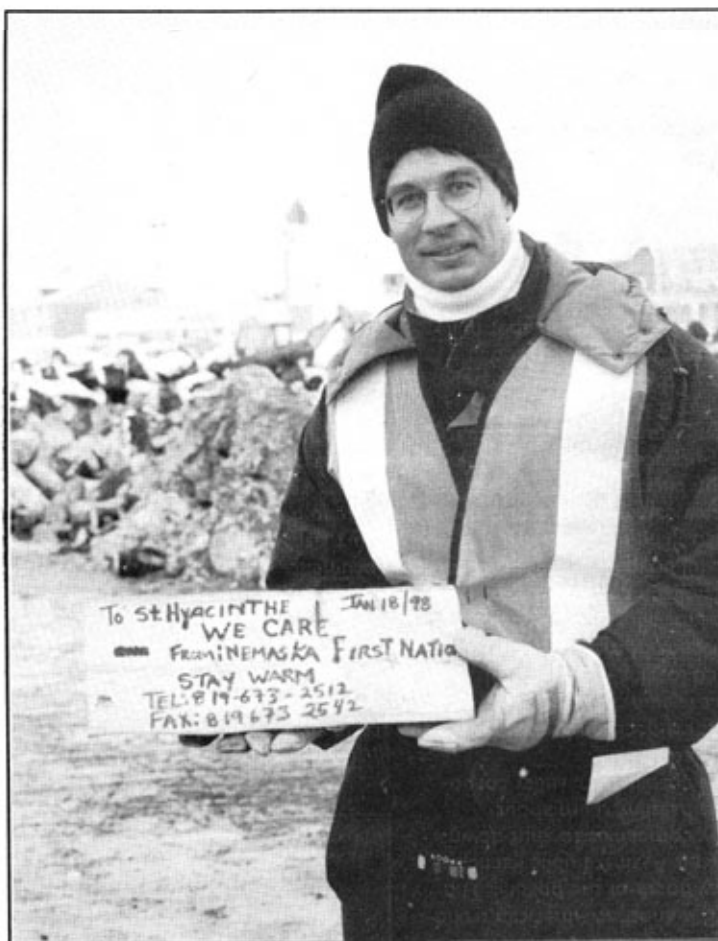
JANUARY 30, 1998

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# REACHING OUT

**CREES SEND RELIEF MISSION TO SOUTH SHORE**

By William Nicholls



PHOTOS BY WILLIAM NICHOLLS

**Patrice Furlan coordinator of the wood lot.**

Cree communities in James Bay are working hand-in-hand with non-Native towns in the North to send help to Montreal-area residents hit by the ice storm.

Hundreds of volunteers came forward in Mistissini to chop trees into firewood, load it onto trucks for transport to the south, donate their own winter wood supplies and raise money. Crees have already sent several truckloads of firewood in a moving van to the South Shore.

"People got fed up with watching all the tragedy down south. Here we



## Favorite covers from Vol. 5 series



were with the power on and comfort but we felt so helpless. We had to do something," said Mistissini Chief William Mianscum.

A local resident came up with the idea of sending wood. "We checked it out and wood was on the list of things needed. So we started to talk to people. Now the whole town's helping out," said Willie MacLeod, community-development director with the band council.

Mistissini quickly found 100 men and 40 women volunteers to make four tree-cutting camps. Others in Mistissini are cooking food for the volunteers, and many residents have given up their winter supplies of wood to send south. A goal of 500 firewood cords, or 20,800 cubic feet, of split dry firewood was Mistissini's objective. Thirty men in Mistissini split the wood donated by locals.

"I think we'll meet that 500 cords goal," said MacLeod at the start of the project, adding that the band would be calling other Cree communities to help out. To date, they have actually sent down more than the 500-cord goal and have cut 1,000 cords.

When the meeting calling for volunteers and action was held, it had to be moved to a larger building because so many people showed up looking for ways to help. "The whole community has come together to do this," said Thomas Coon, vice-president of the Cree Trappers' Association. "The trappers are proud to be part of this relief mission. We aren't the only ones. All I can say is I am proud that we are trying to do something to help out."

The Mistissini Recreation Association also sent down its brand new, one-week-old generator. "I don't know if we'll get it back but we couldn't keep it while knowing people were freezing," said an association official.

Chief Mianscum also got on the Cree regional radio to talk to all Crees. "We told the other eight communities what we were doing and said if you can find it in your hearts to help out then do it," he said.

Two forestry companies, Barrette-Chapais and Chantiers Chibougamau, have donated forestry equipment and workers to haul the trees to the road. Chibougamau residents have joined the effort by donating mechanical wood-splitters. The moving vans were provided by Martell Express.



**20<sup>th</sup> flashback**  
**Sponsored by**  
**Stornoway**  
**Diamond Corporation**

Stornoway would like to congratulate the *Nation* on their 20 years of reporting on the important issues of the Iiyuuuschi. The magazine has been an essential and very supportive medium for Stornoway's communication with the local communities of the Renard Diamond Project.

We look forward to many more years of working together to keep Iiyuuuschi informed on the progress at Quebec's first diamond mine, as well as the opportunities in human resource development that Stornoway will have to offer.



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**COUNTDOWN TO 20<sup>TH</sup>.... 20 ISSUES LEFT**





## THE NATION IS TURNING 20! Be part of history!

To commemorate this milestone, the Nation is embarking on a retrospective countdown to its **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in November 2013.**

Be part of this historic occasion and sponsor one or more of the 26 "**Nation 20<sup>th</sup> flashback center spread**" features, each showcasing the "Best of" the Nation's stories, photos, and award winning coverage throughout the years, to be compiled in a 20<sup>th</sup> collector's edition issue.

The Nation is also shaking things up in 2013 with a new website, improved social media presence, exciting new advertising opportunities, and a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bash in November 2013... stay tuned for more details.

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- Logo on 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bash invitation sent to all the major players in Eeyou Istchee
- Your company's banner/promotional items displayed at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bash venue
- Logo represented in slide show at 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bash
- "**Nation flashback center spread**" (x26) printed as posters on the walls at the 20<sup>th</sup> Bash
- 20<sup>th</sup> Collector's Edition issue featuring all "**Nation 20<sup>th</sup> flashback center spreads**" of the year

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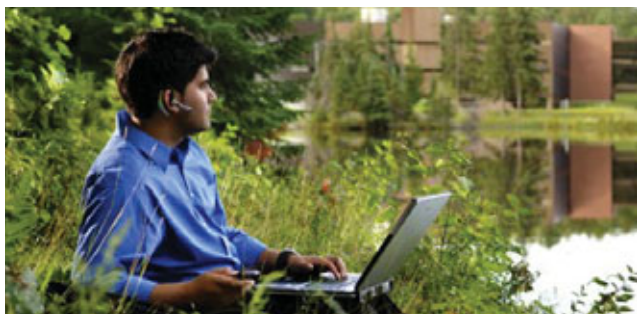
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# Cree students to gather for elite briefing

## Agreements and employment opportunities to be discussed in Ottawa

by Dan Moczula

Cree leaders will host a Roundtable for post-secondary students in Ottawa March 16 and 17. The Roundtable on Capacity Building will brief Cree post-secondary students about treaty agreements with the Canadian government and employment opportunities available to them.

The Roundtable will be free for the 400 students that the Planning Committee estimates will attend.

The two-day exercise at the Westin Ottawa Hotel and Conference Centre will feature guest speakers, including Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, and discussions among participants.

The conference will outline various nation-to-nation agreements and negotiations for the students, who have opportunities to quiz the people negotiating for the Grand Council on the process and impact of the agreements, past and future.

"We [will] explain and empower students and make sure they feel that they belong, have tools, and are part of a strong nation" stated Tina Petawabano, co-chair of the Roundtable Planning

briefing since they will be the future leaders of Eeyou Istchee. "It is important that they understand these agreements which also contribute to services and the economy by creating jobs," Bosum said.

Four main organizations are involved in the Roundtable; the GCC, Cree School Board, Cree Health Board, and CREECO. Representatives from these organizations will inform students of how recent agreements have created opportunities for employment in their respective fields.

Abel Bosum stated this is part of the Roundtable's goal "to identify various jobs that are available and provide advice on how students can get there."

"There are many positions available from the Grand Cree Council needing forestry engineers and lawyers to the Cree School Board needing teachers" said Tina Petawabano.

The Planning Committee is discussing bringing this agreement awareness program to primary and secondary schools.

"We are looking at visiting schools, inviting parents to attend, and bringing past negotiators to speak to both students and parents," said Petawabano.

The need for such a Roundtable reflects the new economic opportunities that have arrived in Northern Quebec because of

recent agreements.

"This is the first such Roundtable held... this is an opportune time since the new Agreement on Governance was passed in July," said Petawabano, citing the agreement reached with the Quebec government that restores Cree Nation rights over Category II and III lands.

Committee and Director of Quebec Relations for the GCC.

The second day features a panel that discusses employment opportunities and how they relate to the agreements.

Abel Bosum, co-chair of Roundtable Planning Committee and former chief of Ouje-Bougoumou, explained that the invited students need this high-level



Abel Bosum

photo by John Farrington



Tina Petawabano

photo by Gaston Cooper

The Planning Committee views the Roundtable is part of a larger effort "to obtain the education and the skills to assume this range of opportunities so that we, ourselves, can exercise meaningful control over the territory."

Tina Petawabano hopes to make students "feel inspired, ask questions and understand, and leave with a better understanding about the agreements."



# Taking the long view

## The Grand Chief comments on the controversy over meeting Prime Minister Harper and the Idle No More movement

by Amy German

Cree Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come is no stranger to a media storm. But when he joined several other Aboriginal leaders in a high profile and controversial meeting with Prime Minister Stephen Harper January 11, the media frenzy was at a fever pitch.

A YouTube video posted just minutes after Coon Come walked into the Langevin Building on Parliament Hill to join the meeting showed a group of protesting women begging him not to enter. They supported the boycott called for by a hunger-striking Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence.

The plea of these women was for Coon Come to instead stand in solidarity with Spence until Governor General David Johnston was invited to participate in the process. But Grand Chief Coon Come insisted he had to attend because “13,000 Crees want [him] to.”

The *Nation* spoke with the Grand Chief to get his view on what happened that day and about the impact of the January 11 day of action on Canada’s Aboriginal peoples.

He emphasized that the first duty of the Grand Council of the Crees is to protect and advance the rights of the Cree people. Thus, he said, he has a duty to ensure that any interaction with the prime minister does not harm the gains that have been achieved for the Cree people.

At the same time, Coon Come explained that the position, the demands and the expectations for those who could potentially attend were literally changing by the hour. At one point there had been a consensus for the meeting to take place with Harper.

“Chief Spence and the Idle No More protestors have played a very important role in highlighting the very serious problems facing the Aboriginal people across the country and that these problems must be addressed on an urgent basis,” Coon Come told the *Nation*.

“So, there was to me a clear opportunity for the Aboriginal leadership to put demands on the table that could result in a fundamental shift in the way that Aboriginal issues are dealt with.”

Coon Come understands the protesters, however, recalling his own participation in many events that involved civil disobedience. But protests must lead to dialogue: “I have blocked forestry roads, I have been in courts and in the international community to try to get their support and at the end of the day you need to talk to someone face to face,” he said.

Coon Come acknowledges the intensity of the emotion in that moment and while he didn’t agree with the women calling on him to boycott the meeting, he said that he does not take this personally. Instead he said that he has nothing but compas-



sion for those who care enough to become emotional about such important issues because fundamentally everyone wants the same things.

“Of course everyone is torn about whether or not you should go into a meeting with the prime minister or whether you should be out on the streets with your people,” said Coon Come. “At the end of the day, I feel that both should happen. I think that there should be people out on the streets and also people on the inside. Everyone has an important role to play in making this moment historic whether we are in the courts, in the streets or in the negotiating room. We may have differences of opinion on tactics but in the last analysis we are united in our determination to make fundamental change.”

Coon Come feels it was not necessary to include Governor General Johnston in the meeting with Harper – one of Chief Spence’s central demands – because of the different role he plays as a ceremonial head of state in Canada. Many of the chiefs who boycotted the meeting said that they were doing so because Chief Spence’s terms were not met.

“Under the Canadian constitution the executive powers are vested in the prime minister and therefore the prime minister will never transfer or delegate to the governor general. The role of the governor general is, for the most part, symbolic at this point in Canada’s history. It is not the governor general who will negotiate with Aboriginal peoples,” said Coon Come.

At the same time, Coon Come recognizes that the Harper government’s arrogance played a role in provoking anger from the Idle No More movement.

"It was somewhat mean spirited on the part of the PM and the GG not to recognize the symbolic role of the Queen in the treaty and not to attend what could be a historic meeting," Coon Come observed.

Coon Come also expressed his support for Chief Spence's efforts to force the Canadian government to deal with Aboriginal demands. In fact, prior to her hunger strike, Spence visited Eeyou Istchee with a delegation from Attawapiskat at the request of Nemaska Chief Matthew Wapachee.

During that time Coon Come said that the Crees made financial contributions to Spence and while he would not divulge a specific amount he did say that it was in the thousands.

As for the actual meeting with Harper, Coon Come said some progress was achieved, including a commitment to establish high-level discussions on treaty relations and comprehensive land claims, which will be overseen by Harper and the Privy Council.

"The negotiations will take place directly between the government and the treaty groups," he said. "There was a commitment to have some serious discussions regarding revenue sharing with respect to resource development on Aboriginal land. Of course, these discussions will involve the provinces and I told the PM that the premiers of Quebec, Alberta and BC have already demonstrated their openness to such discussions."

At the same time, Coon Come noted that Bill C-45 does not affect the Crees of eastern James Bay because they are not subject to the Indian Act. However,

Bill C-38, the previous omnibus legislation that became law last spring, may be another story. Coon Come said the Grand Council's lawyers are still studying the legislation to identify any possible impacts on Eeyou Istchee.

Coon Come said that this interaction involves a complicated process that can take time to understand and resolve. To illustrate this, he recounted the story of how the Cree Naskapi Act came to be. It began with 11 demands by the Cree that would establish self-government. After

"I am on the record of having said many times over the last 20 years that Canada is sitting on a social time bomb. This is a combination of unfulfilled treaty obligations, persistent and deepening poverty of First Nations communities and consistent calls from the international bodies, including the UN, to rectify Canada's profound human rights neglect.

"There is an increase in the young, educated, knowledgeable Aboriginal population and the growing intolerance

"IT WAS SOMEWHAT MEAN SPIRITED ON THE PART OF THE PM AND THE GG NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE SYMBOLIC ROLE OF THE QUEEN IN THE TREATY AND NOT TO ATTEND WHAT COULD BE A HISTORIC MEETING"

eight careful years of negotiations, the Cree Naskapi act replaced the Indian Act for the people of Eeyou Istchee.

His point is to explain how these kinds of issues do not get resolved overnight. And, if Bill C-38 is in any violation or infringement of fundamental Aboriginal rights, the Grand Council will intervene with court challenges like those put forward by two Alberta First Nations who have filed lawsuits against Bill C-45.

Reflecting on the Idle No More movement and his previous experience as a leader of the Cree people and as AFN National Chief, Coon Come had this to say:

of the status quo that could one day explode into widespread civil unrest, protest and direct action. That day may have come.

"Hopefully it will be a very loud wake-up call to Canada's leaders to take the steps to do whatever is needed to fix the relationship between Canada and their Aboriginal peoples and it is time to recognize the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples.

"I was part of the Red Power movement way back when and I think each generation will have to get involved and be able to contribute to some fundamental change and they will do what they need to do because it is their future."

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Wes Prankard building playground

# The struggle for unity

## The First Nations summit with Prime Minister Harper sparks a painful debate between Native leaders and an energized grassroots movement

by Jesse Staniforth



photo by Jeremy Brown

The high drama surrounding the January 11 meeting between First Nations leaders and Prime Minister Stephen Harper has focused national attention on aboriginal issues but also highlighted deep divisions between the grassroots ground troops of the Idle No More movement and Native politicians.

The frenzied and sometimes chaotic preparation for the summit featured tense confrontations on how to challenge the Conservative government's agenda and whether First Nations should even participate in a meeting that had been a central demand behind the high-profile hunger strike of Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence. She eventually refused to attend and said the meeting should not proceed because Governor General David Johnston was not participating in the talks, though he did offer to host Native leaders at subsequent meeting at Rideau Hall.

Two days before the meeting, media reported that Spence, then on the 29th day of her hunger strike, had drawn up a will and was preparing for death. According to APTN, she had already lost 22 pounds and was suffering weakness and stomach pains.

Meanwhile, a gathering of chiefs at Ottawa's Delta Hotel January 10 heard many calls for Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo to walk away from the summit. Some supported Spence's position that both the prime minister and Governor General David Johnston should attend the meeting since First Nations treaties, the central subject of the discussion, were signed with the Crown, not with the executive branch of the Government of Canada. Others felt that Prime Minister Harper's initial intent to be present only for the first and last 30 minutes of the meeting showed that the gathering would change nothing (in the end, Harper was present for the whole five-hour meeting).

The Delta Hotel meeting was moved by an emotional address from Wallace Fox, Chief of the Onion Lake Cree Nation. To cheers and wild applause from the crowd, Fox said no one should "bow down" to Stephen Harper.

"I wasn't sent here to compromise my treaty," he tearfully proclaimed. "To the [AFN] executive, no more deals, please. Use your heart; use your compassion. Why do you need to go meet

the prime minister on his agenda? I know he's scared of us. Now he shows his true colours. Because we can never, never sell our mother earth. We will not compromise. It's not for sale, it never will be – that's not our right. It's our right to protect it."

Bill Namagoose, Executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees, observed that many people were swept



Bill Namagoose, Executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees





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up the emotions expressed in the January 10 meeting at the Delta. A number of people showed support for Chief Fox by standing behind him on the stage, noted Namagoose, but many other leaders felt the meeting with Harper should proceed, including Atleo and former AFN national chiefs such as Cree Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come and Ovide Mercredi.

At a press conference the following morning, Coon Come complained that mainstream Canadian media fixates on this “division” among Aboriginal people, as though they should be more unified than settler Canadians, who are represented in Parliament by five political parties. Namagoose agreed.

“There’s a double standard if we expect Aboriginal people to be totally unanimous on everything,” Namagoose added. “Whereas Canadian society can be divided on all sorts of things. In the mainstream media, you can have 100 native people in the room, 99 agree and one of them doesn’t agree – the one that didn’t agree will make the headlines.”

Still, the decision by Atleo and Coon Come to meet with the prime minister the next afternoon was explosive. On the front steps of Parliament’s Langevin Block, the building (named after the architect of Residential Schools), which houses the prime minister’s office, Coon Come was confronted by an angry crowd shouting, “Don’t go in!”

The Grand Chief responded that he had the support of 13,000 people in Eeyou Istchee, and entered the building to a chorus of boos.

The issue isn’t why Atleo and others proceeded with the meeting, argued Bill Namagoose. “The question is why didn’t [the dissenting chiefs] go into the meeting. They asked for the meeting, the prime minister accommodated them,



photo by Jeremy Brown

and also the Governor General. Only it wasn’t the configuration they wanted. They have a right to their own view, but I think they made a mistake. A lot of chiefs have been calling for a meeting with the prime minister for many years. We’ve had two meetings with the prime

meeting, Idle No More began because people got impatient with that lack of movement, even though we had a Crown-First Nations meeting. The Idle No More movement was sparked by that first meeting.”

“THE QUESTION IS WHY DIDN’T [THE DISSENTING CHIEFS] GO INTO THE MEETING. THEY ASKED FOR THE MEETING, THE PRIME MINISTER ACCOMMODATED THEM, AND ALSO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.”

minister in the space of one year: we have to take advantage of that. You can’t waste an opportunity.”

Others have argued that the meeting Namagoose refers to, the Crown-First Nations Gathering in January 2011, was little more than a symbolic nod to Aboriginal leaders.

“Everybody agrees with that,” Namagoose responded. “It’s unanimous that nothing moved. But that meeting broke the ice. It also helped to visualize that there is an issue, with respect to the conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada. Nobody knew what the answers were last year. Because of that

That connection between the two summits is part of the problem, said Wemindji’s Bradley Georgekish.

“[The January 11 meeting] seemed to be a continuation of the summit from last January rather than a focused meeting on the concerns and demands of the Idle No More movement, which is to address Bills C-45 and 38,” Georgekish said.

Georgekish isn’t completely in opposition to the Grand Chief, however, noting that Cree agreements are with Quebec and Canada, rather than the Crown. “In this regard, I feel he was justified in meeting with the PM. Ultimately, his mandate from the Crees of Eeyou







Istchee is to attend to the best interest of our people while considering current and future generations, to protect our traditional way of life, the cornerstone of our culture.”

Nonetheless, Georgekish sees a disconnect between the demands of the Idle No More movement and the agenda of the Native leaders who met with Harper.

“I would have liked to see the PM show an understanding as far as the

would essentially defeat his omnibus bill.”

Eli Moore, Carleton University student originally from Waswanipi and Senneterre, was one of those who opposed the meeting with the prime minister.

“I didn’t agree with [Grand Chief Coon Come] going in there,” Moore said. “I felt that he undermined the thousands of people on the street, and Chief Spence, and the many chiefs that stood in

“I DIDN’T AGREE WITH [GRAND CHIEF COON COME] GOING IN THERE. I FELT THAT HE UNDERMINED THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ON THE STREET, AND CHIEF SPENCE, AND THE MANY CHIEFS THAT STOOD IN SOLIDARITY WITH IDLE NO MORE.”

demands of First Nations,” he explained. “If Harper had met the demands and sat down with treaty chiefs and the Governor General, the impact would have been two-fold. First, Harper would have shown a flexibility that he has not shown any other demographic of Canada, which many in his party might have seen as a weakness. Secondly, and most important, it would signal the validity and authority of the treaties. As we know, this substantial acknowledgement

solidarity with Idle No More. This meeting was supposed to go under the terms that Chief Spence outlined and what Idle No More wanted, but Harper set the agenda and told everybody there were only [roughly] 20 seats allowed. It’s hard to hear the concerns of all the communities when only 20 chiefs are represented at the table. There’s so many issues out there that need to be addressed.”

Bill Namagoose said people should stop focussing on the different roles of the grassroots movement and the politi-

cal leadership, because their efforts are ultimately complementary.

“We have the backdrop of Idle No More and the grassroots movement. It’s always helpful for political leaders having meetings with high-level government when people are in the streets. If you’re a wise, astute political leader, you have to take advantage of the situation that your people are in the street. That’s how difficult changes are made. When the AFN came to town, there was a debate with the chiefs and the Idle No More movement. And also you have the backdrop of Chief Spence and her hunger strike, which has brought humanity into the issue. You can’t highlight humanity more than with what Chief Spence has done for over a month now.”

However, Namagoose says that Idle No More went to far in its opposition to the meeting with Harper.

“It gets very difficult when a grassroots movement without a political head crosses into the political world and places demands on leaders that they do or don’t do such and such a thing,” he said. “I would have preferred that Idle No More had stayed a pure grassroots movement. It wouldn’t have lost its lustre. But they strayed into the political arena, the domain of elected chiefs and leaders. When you mix those two up, you create an almost unmanageable situation.”

Bradley Georgekish does not like that opposition – he wants Idle No More to continue pushing for more immediate change.

“I think Atleo’s decision to meet with Harper went against what the majority of First Nations in Canada were hoping for,” he says. “Idle No More has to stay focused and determined. It is not a trend. It is a stand for the only home we have, it is a stand for sovereignty and rights. Most important of all, we are protecting our children’s inheritance. There is a collective desire to see the current system, hiding behind the illusion of democracy, returned to the ideals of the Canadian population. I think that if we become entangled by the political aspects, we will lose our focus.”

This sentiment is one shared by Eli Moore, who says that he doesn’t like to

align himself with or against any leader, but rather with ideas.

“My stand is with the people,” he said. “The grassroots isn’t represented as much as it should be. It seems like in the old days, especially with the Great Whale project, the grassroots was really strong among the Crees, and unity was there. Today it doesn’t really feel that way. It feels like we should always follow what our chiefs. But our chiefs aren’t always right, and it’s healthy that we should call them out on that. That’s what Idle No More represents for me: holding our Chiefs accountable, calling them out on their actions, and reminding them that we don’t always agree with what they say. And they shouldn’t take any offense with that.”

For Bill Namagoose, the meeting with Harper was a good start to a much larger project, that of fixing the treaties between First Nations and Canada. National Chief Atleo presented the prime minister with a list of eight demands, including a commitment to work on treaty relationships, resolution of land claims, and resource revenue sharing. Harper agreed to only one on the list – the promise of “high-level meetings” in the future. But Namagoose feels that it will be possible to build both on the January 11 meeting and on the results of meetings in the past.

“There’s been a lot of solutions that have been proposed, and there’s also a lot of solutions on the shelves. If there’s to be a process between Aboriginal leadership and the prime minister’s office,



photo by Jeremy Brown

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples would be a good starting point.

On January 14, National Chief Atleo released a letter summing up the meeting with Prime Minister Harper, at which . “We have seized the attention of Canadians and of this government,” he wrote. “This has been a fateful moment in the decades of struggle by our peoples. We have secured important new ground. Now the harder, but less visible, work of turning promises into action begins.”

Later the same day, Atleo announced that on advice from his doctor, he would be stepping aside for a brief period to “rest and recover” from the stress of the preceding week and exhaustion following an attack of norovirus.

“With the challenges ahead, we need to spend less energy fighting amongst ourselves,” Spence suggested. “We must stand united, strengthen our unity and agree on an agenda that works for all of us and not just the few. The politics within our camp can wait and work itself out on its own time.

“What we have endured here at the island is a small price to pay compared to what our ancestors, our own mothers and fathers endured. Putting aside the real purpose of our hunger strike, this was our way to pay tribute to our ancestors who have forgone some of the harshest periods in our history, to honor those among our Nations who continue to struggle for the basic standard of living to this day, as well as to raise new hope among our youth and to protect our future generations. [...] We will assess carefully our next steps in the coming days and will continue to remain optimistic. [...] We ask you to respect our choices and to leave us the decision when and if this hunger strike should end.”

As this issue of the Nation went into production January 16, a cross-country Idle No More day of action was beginning. A series of blockades were set up, including one at the Ambassador Bridge connecting Windsor, Ontario, to the United States. Bridges, rail lines, and highways were being blockaded at several other points across the country.

“IDLE NO MORE HAS TO STAY FOCUSED AND DETERMINED. IT IS NOT A TREND. IT IS A STAND FOR THE ONLY HOME WE HAVE, IT IS A STAND FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND RIGHTS.”

we don’t need to reinvent the wheel – there are things that have already been looked at, studied, proposed, and recommended.” For instance, Namagoose said issues addressed by the 1996 Royal

The following day, January 15, Chief Theresa Spence responded with a letter to the calls by many, including by Grand Chief Coon Come, that she end her hunger strike.



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# Meet the new boss

## Same as the old? Quebec aboriginal affairs minister

## Élizabeth Larouche promises continuity with previous Liberal policies

by Jesse Staniforth

The appointment of Abitibi-Est MNA Élizabeth Larouche as Quebec's PQ aboriginal affairs minister last September occurred with a minimum of comment, much less controversy. That might not be surprising since the approach of Larouche and her government toward First Nations appear to differ little from that of the previous Liberal government of Jean Charest.

The tone is friendly. In a recent email interview with the *Nation*, Minister Larouche promised to respect the principle of nation-to-nation negotiations with Aboriginal governments in Quebec.

"Whether it's in regard to autonomy, economic or social development, or the promotion of cultures, languages and traditions, my government and I are willing to collaborate," Larouche said. "We will also closely monitor development above the 49th parallel, because the Aboriginal nations are particularly affected by this. We will see to it that they are heard, consulted and considered."

"WHETHER IT'S IN REGARD TO AUTONOMY, ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, OR THE PROMOTION OF CULTURES, LANGUAGES AND TRADITIONS, MY GOVERNMENT AND I ARE WILLING TO COLLABORATE."

She cites the December 3 summit on territories and resources as an example of the young PQ government's good will toward First Nations. "The current government is willing to talk about anything; nothing is taboo. The premier... is committed to real participation and consultation with First Nations people and Inuit."

On the issue of resource development in the north, expressed PQ policies differ little from those of the previous Liberal government.



Élizabeth Larouche

"The government of Quebec is committed to northern development for all," Madame Larouche commented. "Aboriginal communities must be involved in this major project. On November 15th, we announced the creation of the Secrétariat au développement nordique [northern development secretariat], whose responsibility it is to

coordinate the actions of the entire government apparatus to meet the needs of northern communities and ensure coherent development of the North."

Larouche says her priority is to create employment opportunities for young people in Eeyou Istchee and other Aboriginal communities across Quebec.

"With a significant increase in population, communities in northern Québec will increasingly need interesting future opportunities for young people," she


said. "As such, employment and training for young Aboriginals are part of my priorities. I sincerely believe that these prospects can be made possible only through responsible and sustainable economic development."

Asked to explain her government's position on the use of English in First Nations communities and whether her inability to speak English could pose an obstacle to engagement with Aboriginal communities, she responded carefully: "The premier has a profound respect for the Crees and the fact that they speak English. The government of Quebec undertakes its term... with the utmost respect for all that characterizes these nations with which we share this large territory."

Five months into the term of the PQ government, Quebec's policy shifts on the First Nations file are subtle. Time will tell if the PQ of Premier Pauline Marois represents a change in the relationship. And Minister Larouche reaffirmed Quebec's goal to encourage development in Aboriginal communities.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, for his part, appears satisfied that the new minister and her government will respect the interests of the Crees.





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# Planning your career

by Eve-line Landry Guidance Counselor for Sabtuan Adult Education, Cree School Board

In recent times, we have heard about the Plan Nord and about the opportunities it will bring to the Cree communities. This could include jobs in the health, mining or human resources sector, to name a few. Many people are thinking about whether there is a career opportunity for them. What jobs are out there? What job would suit me? How do I get that job or get training for that job? For Sabtuan Adult Education Services (Cree School Board), finding the right career so you love your work is very important.

It is in that spirit that Sabtuan Adult Education Services has developed a new project for the young adults of the Cree communities, the Career Planning Event. During a process of three hours the adult receives individual counseling with a guidance counselor. The guidance counselor helps the participant plan his or her future career according to their strengths, interests, the job market, the programs available, and so on.

This fall, we were able to do our first Career Planning Event in all of the nine Cree communities. We helped more than 100 people in a period of two months. Unfortunately, in some communities, we even had to turn away people. As one of the member of the team of the four guidance counselors (the three others were from the firm AzimutConseils from Trois-Rivières) who participated in the Career Planning Event, I can say that my colleagues, local education consultants, teachers, and a lot of others were thrilled to see so many people committed to find achievable career goals. I can't begin to tell you how rewarding it is to help someone finding a career goal that fits his or her interests, personality and abilities and set that individual on the path to finding fulfilling work.

This experience showed us the desire of the participants to plan their future. Through this process, we also created a data-

What jobs are out there?  
What job would suit me?  
How do I get that job or  
get training for that job?



Pedagogical counsellors at work

base to help us identify the educational needs in the Cree communities. In addition, we will offer the possibility to the candidates who already participated in the Career Planning Event to do a follow up and continue their reflection when we will return to their community.

Once again, I am very grateful for this experience that made me see how much talent, creativity and potential we have in the Cree communities. Our next Career Planning Events will be during winter and spring 2013 and I hope to see there!

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## UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

### The dream catcher

by Xavier Kataquapit

I had a dream the other night. I was a little boy again. There I was, on the land back up on the James Bay coast. I could see the clear water of the Attawapiskat River below and the deep blue sky above with the burning yellow sun as white clouds sailed by. Then I lifted off the ground and flew south with the Niska, a flock of Canada geese. I could see the rivers and thousands of the lakes below me as I soared over the mushkeg and dense pine forests.

As I flew it seemed that I was being transported through time and into the future. I recalled growing up in my community with my family and friends. I remembered travelling on the land in our huge freighter canoes during spring, summer and fall. I recalled the many snowmobile trips on the endless white expanse of ice on James Bay. There were sad visions of distressed neighbours, hopeless teens, destroyed lives, destitute realities everywhere.

Suddenly, I was lost in a blizzard swirling around me. I was still flying but I had no idea where I was, whether I was going up or down, or left, or right. I had to give myself over to the elements and to Mother Earth.

Then, suddenly, I had landed in a northern city. Here I recalled my first visits out of my tiny remote community to the so-called civilized south. I remembered so many of the good people I met on my way through high school in Timmins and North Bay at a time when I felt oppressed and confused. Then I was flying further south. As I flew I felt myself ageing. All of my experiences rushed by me in a stream.

I noticed the sky darken as though a heavy force had come onto the land. I saw people going off to war in far away lands. I saw smoke and oil rushing into the skies, the water and the earth. There were people in the streets raising their voices but being beaten back. The animals and birds were weak and falling away.

As I soared over the cities and towns across our vast country of Canada, I saw people crying as the land was torn up.

There was money and gold flowing down the streets and highways and pushing people aside and suffocating Mother Earth.

I found myself in the corridor of a huge government building. I yelled out but my voice was so faint in this vast place. There were pictures of our history on the walls but most of the doors were shut. I could hear people making plans but I saw thousands on the outside with no voice. I felt helpless. I thought of all those times in history where so the few of the ruling class had decided that the only true religion was the worship of money and power. Sadly, I realized the time had come again for the high priests of money.

I looked on the faces of those brave women and men who chose instead to stand up for freedom and fairness. Everything went dark and a familiar sensation came over me and I realized I was back in a recurring dream. This was a dream I had as a boy where I was trapped in a dark place where I could see no light nor hear no sound. The darkness pressed up against me and I felt the world closing in on me.

To break free now, I flew out of this grand building of stone and mortar. I flew as far as I could up into the sky towards the stars. All I wanted to do was get away from this place and all the pain I could see as the high priests of money shouted out their orders. Their shouts emanated from silver tongues recanting the promises made over so many years.

As I hurtled through the dark, I noticed a light back on the land. I rushed through the air to the glow of a dim flame. As I neared I could see it was a campfire and it drew me back to an island on a river.

I approached a strong fire and I walked right up close to its heart and knelt before it. Then a peace came over me and I was happy, relieved and comforted by the smiling face of Chief Theresa Spence. She sat in the glow of the grandfather stones and basked in the hopeful smoke as good spirits lifted her voice far and wide over the land.



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The Centre for Native Education has changed its name to the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC). The new name is inclusive of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the centre serves and recognizes its role as a resource for the Concordia community. For any further details contact: [aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca](mailto:aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca) or 514-848-2424 ext. 7327.

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